

H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Mark Kupovetsky, Evgenii Starostin, Marek Web, eds. *Dokumenty istorii i kultury evreev v arkhivakh Moskvy* (*Jewish Documentary Sources in Moscow Archives*). Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities, 1997. 503 pp. ISBN 978-5-7281-0211-3.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Veidlinger (Department of History, Indiana University, Bloomington)

Published on H-Russia (February, 1999)

Dokumenty po istorii i kulture evreev v arkhivakh Moskvy (*Jewish Documentary Sources in Moscow Archives*) edited by Mark Kupovetsky, Evgenii Starostin, and Marek Web, is an essential resource for any scholar doing archival work on Jewish issues in Moscow, as well as an invaluable source of information on Moscow Jewish institutions and individuals.

The book is the first in a series of guides to be published jointly by the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York. Future volumes will focus on St. Petersburg and provincial archives within Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The volume under review contains an introduction in both English and Russian, briefly outlining the history of the project, surveying other archival collections relating to Russian-Jewish history, and describing the criteria used to select archival collections for inclusion in the volume. Essentially, all records of Jewish provenance, such as those originating from Jewish communities, Jewish educational institutions, charitable institutions, cultural institutions, commercial institutions, professional institutions, political parties, social movements and individuals were selected, as well as governmental and municipal records, archives of public institutions and associations, and personal papers relating to Jews or Judaism.

The breadth of material covered is exceptional. The book contains descriptions of archival holdings dating from as far back as the sixteenth century (fonds relating to early Jewish settlements in Lithuania and Poland in RGADA) and as recently as 1991 (The Central Committee of the CPSU in RtsKhIDNI). Most archival collections, however, date from 1917-1953. Of particular note are the records of the German Reich seized from Berlin, which can be found in the Center for the Preservation of Historical Documentary Collections. The guide also contains an appendix listing collections that met the criteria, but were, for unstated reasons, not included. Although other

editors would, perhaps, have chosen to include many of these entries, their inclusion in an appendix nevertheless provides important information for those seeking simply to verify that a collection exists and to locate it.

The archives surveyed are divided into five sections: 1) Central state archives, including the Russian State Archives of Early Records, the State Archives of the Russian Federation, the Russian State Military-Historical Archives, the Russian State Archives of Economics, the Russian State Archives of Literature and Art, the Russian State Archives of Film and Photo Documentation, the Russian State Archives of Phonographic Documentation, and the Center for the Preservation of Historical and Documentary Collections; 2) former Communist Party archives, including the Russian Center for the Preservation of Documents of Contemporary History, the Center for the Preservation of Documents of Youth Organizations, and the Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation; 3) Institutional archives, including the archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of History at the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Russian Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 4) Moscow municipal archives, including the Moscow Central Historical Archives, the Moscow Central Municipal Archives, and the Moscow Central Archives of Social Movements; and 5) manuscript divisions in libraries and museums, including the Russian National Library, the State Historical Museum, the State Literary Museum, the Glinka State Central Museum of Music, the Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum, and the Museum of the Revolution. The project was unable to gain access to the archives of the President of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the KGB.

Each entry contains several paragraphs of explanation. Although the editors could have set more precise guidelines for their contributors giving the entries a more standardized appearance, the individual entries do share some characteristics. They usually outline the history of

the archival collection, describe its content, and provide a brief history of the organization or individual under examination. In many cases, the historical sketch of the organization is so informative, that the book can actually be used as an encyclopedic source as well.

Comprehensive indexes organized according to subject, name, and geography in both English and Russian enhance the guide's usability, and allow for extensive cross-referencing.

Not only is this archival guide an essential tool for researchers and a model for future guides to emulate, but it can also serve as a miniature encyclopedia of Russian Jewry. One can only hope that the forthcoming guides in this series will be of equal value.

Copyright (c) 1999 by H-Net, all rights reserved. This work may be copied for non-profit educational use if proper credit is given to the author and the list. For other permission, please contact h-net@h-net.msu.edu

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the list discussion logs at:

<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl>.

Citation: Jeffrey Veidlinger. Review of Kupovetsky, Mark; Starostin, Evgenii; Web, Marek, eds., *Dokumenty istorii i kultury evreev v arkhivakh Moskvvy* (*Jewish Documentary Sources in Moscow Archives*). H-Russia, H-Net Reviews. February, 1999.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=2793>

Copyright © 1999 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu.